

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TANGIE 00303 131350Z

ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NEAE-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 ICAE-00 DLOS-09 L-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 EB-08 CG-00 DOTE-00

CA-01 SCS-06 /065 W

-----040707 131359Z /75

O R 131115Z JUN 78

FM AMCONSUL TANGIER

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3990

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL SEVILLE IMMEDIATE

NAVAL STATION ROTA IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON IMMEDIATE

COMS XTHFLEET IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

UNCLAS TANGIER 0303

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN

SUBJ: MARITIME DISASTER, AMERICAN FLAG VESSEL YELLOWSTONE

REF: TANGIER 0301

1. AT 0800 ZULU JUNE 13 THE SS YELLOWSTONE AND THE ALGERIAN SHIP
IBN BATOUTA WERE STILL LOCKED TOGETHER. SHIPS HAVE BEEN DRIFTING
IN AN EASTERLY DIRECTION SINCE THEIR COLLISION YESTEDAY AND ARE
NOW 37 MILES SOUTHEAST OF EUROHA POINT, GIBRALTAR. TWENTY-ONE
MEMBERS OF THE YELLOWSTONE CREW HAVE BEEN EVACUATED TO GIBRALTAR.
TWO ARE SERIOUSLY INJURED (THE SAME TWO INJURED SEAMEN MENTIONED
REFTEL BOTH OF WHOM ARE U.S. CITIZENS.) NINETEEN MORE SEAMEN
WERE LANDED BY THE BRITISH SHIP OLNA AT GIBRALTAR DURING THE
NIGHT. U.S. NAVAL LIAISON OFFICER NEWTON HAS TALKED WITH SOME OF
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THESE SEAMEN AND DESCRIBES THEIR CONDITION AS SNATCHED AND
BRUISED BUT OTHERWISE GOOD. ACCORDING TO COMMANDER NEWTON'S LATEST
INFORMATION THERE IS ONE CONFIRMED DEATH AND FOUR SEAMEN ARE MISSING
END PRESUMED DEAD. INFORMATION I HAVE DISSEMINATED RECEIVED FROM THE HMS
APOLLO ANCHORED IN TANGIER LISTS TWO CONFIRMED DEAD AND THREE
MISSING.

2. THE YELLOWSTONE HAS NOW SETTLED SIX FEET BELOW NORMAL LEVEL AND

IS STILL SETTLING THOUGH VERY SLOWLY. SALVAGE OFFICER ABOARD BRITISH MESSEL DOES NOT BELIEVE CONTINUED SETTLING IS CAUSE FOR IMMEDIATE ALARM. WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN SHIPS ARE SEPARATED REMAINS TO BE SEEN BUT AGAIN SAME SALVAGE OFFICER BELIEVES THE YELLOWSTONE'S CHANCES OF STAYING AFLOAT ONCE SEPARATION HAS BEEN ACHIEVED ARE AT LEAST 50-50. THE CAPTAIN OF THE YELLOWSTONE WAS UNWILLING TO AGREE TO THE SEPARATION OF THE VESSELS DURING THE NIGHT BUT DID AGREE EARLY THIS MORNING. A FIRST ATTEMPT TO HULL THEM APART WAS MADE AT 0645 ZULU THIS MORNING BUT FAILED. ANOTHER ATTEMPT WAS TO HAVE BEEN MADE AT 0805 ZULU. I HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED ANY REPORT AS TO THE RESULT OF THAT ATTEMPT.

3. THE IBN BATOUTE HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN MOST COOPERATIVE. HUNGARIAN CAPTAIN OF THAT VESSEL WILLINGLY AGREED TO THE TWO VESSELS STAYING TOGETHER UNTIL THE CAPTAIN OF THE YELLOWSTONE WAS WILLING TO PERMIT THEIR SEPARATION. THOUGH LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES HAVE MADE COMMUNICATION DIFFICULT IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THERE WERE NO DEATHS ABOARD

THE IBN BATOUTA. DAMAGE TO THE IBN BATOUTA REPORTEDLY IS SLIGHT AND THE VESSEL APPEARS ABLE TO RETURN UNDER ITS OWN POWER TO ORAN ONCE THE VESSELS HAVE BEEN SEPARATED. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE HMS APOLLO THE IBN BATOUTA RAMMED THE ENGINE ROOM AREA OF THE YELLOWSTONE ON ITS PORT SIDE.

4. THE HMS APOLLO WHICH HAS BEEN IN TANGIER FOR THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS DEPARTED AT 0900 ZULU THIS MORNING TO RELIEVE THE HMS AURORA
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AND TAKE CHARGE OF THE SALVAGE AND RESCUE OPERATION. LATEST WORD RECEIVED BY THE APOLLO INDICATES YELLOWSTONE WILL PROBABLY BE TOWED TO GIBRALTAR. THE TOWING JOB WAS OFFERED TO THE GERMAN TUG SEAFALK WHICH HAD BEEN STANDING BY BUT ITS OWNERS DECLINED TO TAKE ON THE JOB. NO OTHER COMMERCIAL TUGS CAPABLE OF HANDLING THE TOW ARE AVAILABLE AND THEREFORE THE TASK WILL PROBABLY FALL TO BRITISH NAVAL TUGS WHICH ARE ALSO STANDING BY.

5. I UNDERSTAND A SISTER SHIP OF THE YELLOWSTONE, THE USS MOHAWK, WAS CLOSE TO THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT DURING THE NIGHT AND HAS TRANSMITTED TO THE RIO GRAND TRANSPORT COMPANY THE NAMES OF THE DEAD, INJURED AND MISSING. THEIR NAMES HAVE NOT YET BEEN GIVEN TO THE BRITISH. U.S. NAVAL LIAISON OFFICER NEWTON HAS THE NAMES OF THE SURVIVORS THAT HAVE BEEN LANDED IN GIBRALTAR BUT POOR TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION HAS THUS FAR PREVENTED HIM FROM GETTING THE NAMES TO ME. THE CAPTAIN AND ABOUT 14 MEMBERS OF HIS CREW ARE REPORTEDLY STILL ABOARD THE YELLOWSTONE. I UNDERSTAND A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RIO GRAND TRANSPORT COMPANY IS ENROUTE TO GIBRALTAR. / \$ 0-5:#\$:9, 7)-4- 8 5-,5 #3,46 (-5"-49 5#8 .94,8,& 59&8?4-)5-4 -,\$ 28)) &9 .6 3)* 5#8 -*534,99, 8*,84:7. 5-,:3 2-44-,5.EASTMAN

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